

THE KEYS



Church of St. Peter the Apostle

Anglican Catholic Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic States

www.dmas-acc.org

The Rev. Canon Peter Geromel, OHI, DMin - Rector

December 2023

www.anglicancatholic.org

<https://stpetersacc.org>

Fr. Seeley's Corner

If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.

The question of salvation is always before the world and the Christian community. What does it take to be saved, to reach Heaven?

Here we have a story of a woman who only touches the hem of Jesus' garment, and is healed. She does not speak with him or ask him to be healed, she seems to take it for herself, and her faith makes it so.

So the question is... how much faith do you need to be saved? How much contact with Jesus and his Church do you need to make it to Heaven?

Do you *need* the Sacraments?

Do you *need* the Church?

Do you *even need* the Bible?

This is a question that has been asked for centuries by Christians and those looking to become Christians: especially when the Church is in trouble.

So to the first question: How do we understand the way of salvation, or how much Jesus do you need to be saved?

I think the best way to look at this is to think about someone who wants to go from say Cape Cod (Massachusetts) to Cornwall (England)

This is a long way, but not too long. It represents a lifetime.

If someone wanted to go from Cape Cod to Cornwall they would probably take a ship; a large boat: ship with sails and a rudder. (I'm using a biblical/Anglican perspective here and not necessarily a modern one)

The Church is often compared to a ship:

The wind, the waves, and the storms on the sea traditionally represent the nature of man on earth, tossed about by sin, temptation and the problems and cares of the world he lives in.

Thus a boat is a good representation of the Church:

- The sails are like the Sacraments (Baptism, Confession/Absolution, Eucharist etc..) They catch the wind of divine grace and move the soul along, to aid it in its journey, to make less work for the soul on its journey.
- The rudder is like the Bible, it helps the soul steer.
- The nave, which preserves you from the waves and such is like Bishops and Priests who teach and steer the Church: they keep you dry so to speak.

Thus if you are in the ship of the Apostolic Churches your voyage won't be without some waves rocking you about, but you'll be safe and secure on your voyage.

But what if you did not want to take such a big ship? Ships like that are full of a lot of people, and that can be a challenge on its own. What if you'd rather work with a smaller group of people who are dedicated. They take a schooner rather than a big ship.

They have the Bible (the rudder), They have a bit of a nave, so they might get wet, but there is some shelter. But they really have no sails (the Sacraments), as such their ship is smaller and will have more difficulty making the voyage. Will they make it? Maybe, perhaps even probably, but the chance of shipwreck is greater than in the larger ship of an apostolic church. while they might make it, it's going to be a lot more difficult.

Now let's say that you're not much of a joiner, you'd rather go alone or in a very small group of your choosing in a smaller boat, let's say a yacht. You might even go with a group of yachts.

You have the rudder (the Bible) and an engine (the desire to be saved = emotion) and you're going to try to make it to Cornwall. Will you make it? Maybe, but probably not. The sea is going to get rough, and you do not have the equipment needed (I don't think you can even carry enough gas to get all the way).

Now let's say someone else is even more resistant to following the crowd, they want to be even more independent, it's like they're going on a motorboat.

So they have the rudder (the Bible), they have the motor (desire and emotion), but they have no sails, and no navel. So while they may make progress, they are going to get tossed to and fro by the waves, and since they are alone and have no navel to keep them from the waves, they may easily get lost or throw overboard. Will they make it? Maybe, but it's very unlikely.

Next you have the rebels: they want to do it all alone: they'll read the Bible and figure it out by themselves: they're going to take a rowboat.

Will they make it? Almost certainly not!. They have paddles (instead of a rudder, so it's still the Bible, but without a guide), and they have their own manpower. Will they make it? Not likely, but they might make it a good way, but not all the way: the wind and the waves and the distance they have to go are probably going to wear them out and capsize them.

Finally we have those individuals who think they know best, or who are independent to the point of pride: I am speaking of the "spiritual but not religious" people.

They are going to try and swim from Cape Cod to Cornwall. Will they make it? No way! The distance, and waves and the sheer fatigue of the journey will be too much for them.

Now God can intervene; and while nothing is impossible with God, but he established the Church for a reason; to get man to Heaven. The more you try and go it alone, without the church Jesus established, the less likely you are to make it.

This is a visual example of what the Church does in the world, it helps you get to heaven amidst the tumult of earthly life. The example is not perfect, but it illustrates what the Church does in the world, and what it offers in face of the difficulties and challenges each person faces.

So what does it take to be saved? It takes faith in Jesus and to live your life in light of his Gospels.

Now everyone is going to fall short of that, so you need some form of forgiveness and some form of fortification.

For the Churches of apostolic origin: Anglican, Roman Catholic, Orthodox (and some Lutherans) this is built in with Baptism, Confession, Absolution, and Holy Communion; so members of these churches can carry their crosses knowing that their failings and shortcomings will be made up by the power of Jesus through the Church.

But once we're outside of these churches it becomes less sure. So can someone be saved in one of these churches? Or even without a church? Yes, but it becomes increasingly difficult the farther you get away from the apostolic churches.

So salvation contains two elements: Faith and a journey. To believe in Jesus requires faith, and each person needs to make that effort and believe in Jesus.

The other element is the journey, and that's really the hard part. Everyday to take up your cross and follow Jesus, to battle the inward battle against sin, and the outward battle against the world.

So how close to Jesus do you need to be to be healed? Can you but touch the hem of his garment?

In order to believe the hem of his garment is sufficient, and many are lead to believe by many different aspects of the faith; this is why we have church buildings that are beautiful, why clergy wear distinctive clothes, a uniform if you will, and why it's so important to make an effort every day to be close to Jesus, because you never know where the hem of his garment is ~ it could be you.

But for the journey we need the Church. Those who seek to go it alone will find the journey long and arduous and will have many excuses to stop swimming, or rowing, or just navigating the rough waters of life. To stop following Jesus and go with the world. You can see this in not only popular culture today, but in much of mainstream religion. How many churches or individuals of faith have made peace with the world and stopped carrying their crosses and resisting the world. Many of our religious leaders today, even in apostolic churches have found it too hard to carry the cross and have gone along with the world. They need our prayer... but the one thing they do not need is for us to follow them.
Do not follow them!

We know the faith as we have 2000 years to look back at. We also know that those who resist the world in their own day will be the heroes in the next generations and beyond. Amen.

News and Information

December 16th - Cookies with Santa (tentative), 1-4 pm

December 23rd - Advent Lessons & Carols, 5 pm.

December 24th - Fourth Sunday of Advent celebrated at 8 & 10 am.

Christmas Eve - Family Service, 6 PM; Carol Sing, 10:30 pm; Midnight Mass, 11 pm.

Christmas Day - Matins & Mass, 10 am.

St. Stephen's Day, Tuesday, December 26th - Mass, 12 Noon.

St. John the Evangelist, Wednesday, December 27th - Mass, 6 pm.

Holy Innocents' Day, Thursday, December 28th - Mass, 12 Noon.

DECEMBER, 2023						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
LEGEND: HC - Holy Communion; FHE – Festal Holy Eucharist; HE - Holy Eucharist; SS – Sunday School; PG - Prayer Group; EP – Evening Prayer; MP – Morning Prayer; P&HU – Prayers and Holy Unction					[1]	[2] 5:00 p.m. HC
[3] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS ADVENT I	[4]	[5]	[6] 6:00 p.m. Poem study 7:00 p.m. HC 7:30 p.m. Vestry	[7] 12 noon HC	[8]	[9] 5:00 p.m. HC
[10] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE Annual Meeting ADVENT II	[11]	[12]	[13] 6:00 p.m. HC	[14] 12 noon HC	[15]	[16] 1-4 p.m. (tent.) Santa 5:00 p.m. HC
[17] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS ADVENT III	[18]	[19]	[20] 6:00 p.m. HC	[21] 12 noon HC	[22]	[23] 5:00 p.m. Advent lessons and carols
[24] 8:00 a.m. MP & HC 10:00 a.m. HE, SS 6:00 p.m. Family service 10:30 p.m. Carols 11:00 p.m. FHE ADVENT IV CHRISTMAS EVE	[25] 10:00 a.m. Matins and HC CHRISTMAS DAY	[26] 12 noon HC ST. STEPHEN'S DAY	[27] 6:00 p.m. HC ST. JOHN EVANGELIST	[28] 12 noon HC HOLY INNOCENTS	[29]	[30] 5:00 p.m. HC

IN THE LORD'S SERVICE

If you cannot fulfill your assigned duty because of an urgent reason, PLEASE SECURE A REPLACEMENT.

	December 3	December 10	December 17	December 24	December 31
Coffee Hour	V. Williams	C. Pappas	M. Slayton	E. Paisley	Volunteer needed
Epistoler 8 a.m.	D. Drysdale	C. Von Claparede	G. Mauney	D. Drysdale	C. Von Claparede
Epistoler 10 a.m.	P. Williams	T. Paisley	G. Terrell	P. Williams	T. Paisley

Altar servers and ushers will be assigned as available before each service.

2023 Vestry (term end): Dan Drysdale ('23), George Mauney ('25), Lisa Olver ('24),
Ted Paisley ('24), Mike Slayton ('25), Phil Williams ('23)